

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 18.

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An airflow indicator for a vacuum cleaner, comprising:

a housing mounted to a casing of the vacuum cleaner;

a piston chamber defined within the housing;

a piston received in the piston chamber and movable therein between a first position and a second position;

a first port formed in the housing and communicating with the piston chamber, the first port being open to ambient;

a second port formed in the housing and communicating with the piston chamber, the second port being spaced from the first port and being open to a filter chamber of the vacuum cleaner; and

a valve mounted to the housing in one of the first port, the second port and the piston chamber for obstructing air passage into the piston chamber from one of the first port and the second port, the valve including a diaphragm having a slit that opens in response to a predetermined pressure differential between the first port and the second port.

2. (Currently Amended) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein said diaphragm slit comprises a cross-slit.

3. (Currently Amended) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein the predetermined pressure differential occurs when the filter chamber is relatively full of debris creating a low pressure relative to atmosphere ambient.

4. (Original) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein the piston moves from the first position toward the second position when the diaphragm is open.

5. (Original) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the housing is transparent to permit viewing of the piston when the piston is in at least one of the second position and a transition toward the second position.

6. (Original) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein said housing is so oriented that gravity urges the piston toward the first position.

7. (Currently Amended) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein the diaphragm slit remains closed at a pressure differential of less than about 56 inches of H₂O.

8. (Original) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein the diaphragm is fabricated from a material including silicon.

9. (Original) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein the piston includes a solid first face and an apertured second face leading to an interior cavity.

10. (Currently Amended) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein the piston chamber is a generally trapezoid-shaped prism and the piston is similarly shaped such that the cross-sectional area of the piston substantially fills the cross-sectional area of the piston chamber.

11. (Original) The airflow indicator of claim 1 wherein the second port is oriented approximately normal to at least one of a longitudinal axis of the piston chamber and the first port.

12. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner having a vacuum source comprising:

a casing and a filter chamber; and

an airflow indicator mounted within the casing, the airflow indicator comprising:

a housing,

a piston chamber defined within the housing,

a piston slidably mounted in the piston chamber and reciprocating between a first position and a second position,

a first port formed in the housing for connecting the piston chamber to ambient,

a second port formed in the housing, and spaced from the first port, for connecting the piston chamber to the filter chamber,

a valve mounted to the housing [[and]] in one of the first port, the second port and between the first and second ports, the valve selectively openable in response to a predetermined pressure differential between ambient and the filter chamber causing an air stream to pass from the first port into the piston chamber, the air stream urging the piston towards the second position.

13. (Currently Amended) The vacuum cleaner of claim 12 wherein the airflow indicator housing includes a transparent portion for viewing the piston in at least one of the ~~piston~~ second position and movement of the piston toward the second position.

14. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 12 wherein the casing includes a viewing opening for viewing the piston in at least one of the second position and movement toward the second position.

15. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 12 wherein said piston is urged toward the first position.

16. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 15 wherein gravity urges said piston towards the first position.

17. (Original) The vacuum cleaner of claim 12 wherein said piston comprises a solid first face and a second face including an opening leading to an interior cavity.

18. (Cancelled).

19. (Currently Amended) [[The]] A method of claim 18 wherein the step of using the air flowing from atmosphere to the associated container comprises the subsidiary step indicating when a debris collecting filter chamber of a vacuum cleaner is filling up, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an airflow passage between the chamber and atmosphere;
obstructing flow in the airflow passage with a normally closed valve;
filling the filter chamber with debris thereby causing a predetermined pressure differential between atmosphere and the filter chamber;

opening the valve thereby opening the airflow passage and causing air to flow from atmosphere towards the filter chamber; and

using the air flowing towards the filter chamber to visually indicate that an associated container is filling up by moving a piston within the airflow passage from a resting position toward a positive airflow position which indicates that the associated container is filling up.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of: urging the piston toward the resting position.

21. (Currently Amended) An airflow indicator for a vacuum cleaner comprising: including a casing having a filter chamber[[;]], said airflow indicator comprising:

an air path on the casing leading from ambient into said filter chamber;
an indicator movably mounted in said air path;

a valve mounted in said air path for selectively allowing a flow of air through said air path, said valve comprising a diaphragm formed of a resilient material, said diaphragm including a slit which opens when an air pressure differential between ambient and said filter chamber exceeds a predetermined limit.

22. (Currently Amended) The indicator of claim 21 wherein the diaphragm slit comprises a pair of intersecting slits.

23. (Original) The indicator of claim 21 wherein said diaphragm comprises a material including silicon.

24. (Original) The indicator of claim 21 wherein said diaphragm is approximately disc shaped.

25. (Original) The indicator of claim 24 wherein said disc shaped diaphragm includes a bowed central portion.

26. (Original) The indicator of claim 24 wherein said disc shaped diaphragm includes a ribbed peripheral portion.

27. (Original) The indicator of claim 21 wherein said diaphragm slit opens at an air pressure differential of greater than about 56 inches of H₂O.

28. (New) The method of claim 20 wherein the step of urging the piston toward the resting position comprises the subsidiary step of:

orienting the piston relative to gravity so that gravity urges the piston toward the resting position.

29. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the step of using the air flowing from atmosphere to the associated chamber comprises the subsidiary steps of:

providing said piston within a piston chamber defined by a housing mounted to a casing of the vacuum chamber; and

providing at least a transparent portion of said housing adjacent said positive airflow position to permit viewing of said piston when in said positive airflow position.

30. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the step of opening the valve comprises the subsidiary steps of:

providing said valve as a diaphragm having a slit that opens in response to said predetermined pressure differential; and

opening said valve when said predetermined pressure differential occurs.